

2/10/71

Dear Phil,

The mail was heavy this a.m. As always this time of the year, when my wife has our only regular income, as a tax consultant, I picked the mail up at the post office. Unlike most days, when most relates to work, this was a day of letters from friends. There is no conflict, for those with whom I work are friends. But this was a day when only one of the letters had to do with work. So, home by 8:15, before resuming work I read and this time enjoyed my mail, then glanced at the papers, then back to work for which my head is not now straight enough. No insult.

I'm deep in pretending I'm a lawyer. No lawyer ever had a more non-lawyer approach. I'm editing the draft of an enormous response of several kinds to one of the trickier and crooked government ploys. The length may be enough to cost me the case, for it will be a rare judge with enough interest to read a third of a book as a response/motions. But, I dream that his clerk or secretary will be interested enough to jog him. However, I will make a record, and if there is a conflict, that is my choice. I also think that the permeating dishonesty, by the Department of Justice, will make it a suitable appendix for the book in which that for which I sue will be used. So, it can't be a complete waste.

You do give me some comfort in the story of your younger friend. The things that perhaps most of all has troubled me is what I've regarded as premature and overly-rapid aging. The fatigue is not in any way in the mind. It is of the body. Until the weather got bad, even on summer days when I knew I'd get a bit of exercise, if only brief periods of swimming, I took a brisk walk every morning. The ground had made it too unsafe and the wind too keen in the persisting cold for me to brave it now. Infrequently I putter around in the basement, doing odds and ends of householder chores, but they are not real exercise. Nor are those I take as therapy (one immediately preceded the second spell of dizziness, but I'm doing it again).

I guess I'm the captive of poverty and the strong believe that I must do what I must, side from principle for two other reasons: if I don't it will not now be done and because I've learned that I see more of what others do not than others do of what I don't. I believe it is important enough to have no misgivings about the cost, of which I am aware. The poverty precludes acceptance of such kindnesses as your offer (one of two).

While I'm aware that such things are not to be dismissed and of the difficulty of isolating the cause, I do not feel it is emotional in origin, and I suppose that is one of the reasons I'm a little bothered by it.

On the other hand, as I near my 58th birthday, I know, whether or not I'm happy about it, that a certain amount of this kind of thing becomes more inevitable and not unusual. Maybe my problem is that my mind is so much younger than my body. Less flippantly, that if one has basic mental health, the mind ages more slowly under the weight of heavy work and rough schedule.

Strange that you should mention a year off. When we gave up our farm, that promising operation having been ruined by lowflying military aviation (I set one of the legal precedents in this area), we dreamed of the day when the government would pay for the damage. We then planned to go to Baltimore, walk along the docks until we saw a ship (freight) that looked promising, ask if they had accommodations, and once aboard, ask where they were bound! But even then I planned to take a typewriter, for there were two books I planned before this subject hooked me. Now we can't dream that dream.

Probably I'm more fortunate than most men with similar problems and situations for what I suspect would be the greatest problem is not mine. I'm satisfied I'd doing something significant, socially useful, important, and that fairly well. Aside from the more external things, can a man want more? So, I've got a kind of tranquility through it all.

Speaking of satisfaction, I enclose a copy of the pre-pub review from the current Publisher's Weekly. I suspect turgidity is akin it beauty in the phrase, being in the mind. The v-p of a large house who told me of this review by phone and sent me this copy was then reading the book and went out of his way to dispute that (alone) and to say he hated it every time he had to put the book down. Which, natch, I liked very much. He told me he was recommending the next day that his house make a reprint offer. I asked him if this might not be premature (and said I was content in his hands and with his judgement) on two counts: that I'd get a better offer if the book goes in hardback and I'd rather that the guy who makes the decision have the facsimiles in his hand and eye. I do not expect that to happen, certainly not now, the attitude toward the subject not having changed. But I don't have to tell you this makes me feel good.

Now I'm gonna take some of Dr. Ohil's advice and go to bed an hour early.

Your letter made me feel good. Thanks. I presume from your silence that you've healed well. Best to Jean,

Sincerely,
Hal